

Alcohol and Pregnancy Don't Mix

What is Fetal Alcohol Syndrome?

Fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) is a set of physical and mental birth defects that can result when a woman drinks alcohol during her pregnancy. When a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, such as beer, wine, or mixed drinks, so does her baby. There is no safe level of alcohol consumption during pregnancy. Alcohol passes through the placenta right into the developing baby. Alcohol can affect the baby's development in the very first weeks-before a woman knows that she is pregnant. The baby may suffer lifelong damage as a result. FAS is characterized by premature birth, low birth weight, brain damage, and facial deformities. Heart, liver, and kidney defects also are common, as well as vision and hearing problems. Individuals with FAS have difficulties with learning, attention, memory, and problem solving. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than half of all women of childbearing age in the United States report that they drink alcohol. Also, more than half of all pregnancies are unplanned.

Fortunately, FAS and other prenatal alcohol related disorders are 100% preventable. In Florida, an estimated 2,040 infants are born each year with measurable effects that can be attributed to prenatal alcohol exposure.

Can Fetal Alcohol Syndrome be treated?

While FAS can be treated, so far, no cure has been found. However, since the only known cause is alcohol use during pregnancy, an expectant mother can prevent this irreversible condition.

For more information , visit the www.nichcy.org

